CHIEF LITTLE TURTLE

1752 - 1812

ME-SHE-KIN-NO-QUAH CHIEF
OF THE MIAMI INDIANS
TEACHER OF HIS PEOPLE
FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES

HIS ENDEAVORS TOWARD PEACE
SHOULD SERVE AS AN INSPIRATION
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
THIS PLOT OF GROUND THE LAST
RESTING PLACE OF CHIEF LITTLE
TURTLE, IS DEDICATED TO THE
CHILDREN OF AMERICA AND MADE
A PUBLIC PARK IN 1959
THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF

ELEANOR SMELTZLY AND
MARY CATHERINE SMELTZLY

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
ALLEN COUNTY-FORT WAYNE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LITTLE TURTLE

1752 - 1812

The Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society
1960

DEDICATION COMMITTEE

Albert F. Diserens
Mrs. D. Wayne Henricks
Fred J. Reynolds
Roland R. Schulz
George A. Sweet
William T. White

LITTLE TURTLE MEMORIAL PARK DEDICATION

June 12, 1960 - 2:30 P.M.

POSTING OF THE COLORS
Harold Brubaker, Commander
American Legion Post No. 47 Color Guard

INTRODUCTIONS
William T. White, Committee Chairman

GREETINGS

Honorable Paul M. Burns, Mayor
City of Fort Wayne

Mrs. Walter Turner, President
Allen County Council

Willard Shambaugh, President
Fort Wayne Community Schools

Frederick B. Shoaff, President
Board of Park Commissioners

Mrs. J. Howard Wilkens, President
Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

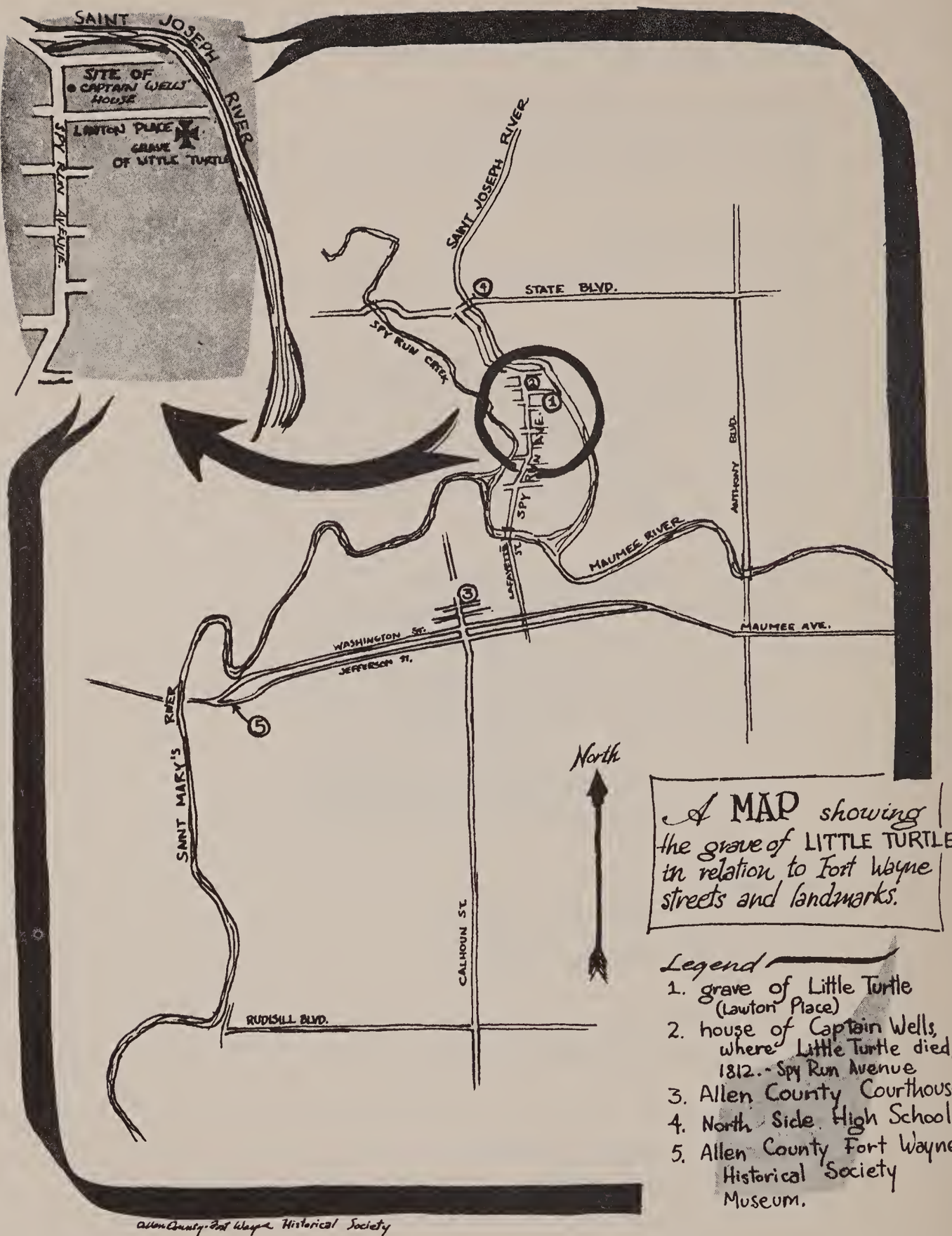
ADDRESS
Dr. John W. Meister, Pastor
First Presbyterian Church

UNVEILING
Miss Mary Catherine Smeltzly

CEREMONY
Dennis W. Parquet, Leader
Explorer Troup 2300

MILITARY SALUTE
David Poitras, Commander
American Legion Post No. 47 Firing Squad

TAPS
Theron P. Weaver, Bugler
American Legion Post No. 47


SAINT JOSEPH RIVER
SITE OF CAPTAIN WELLS' HOUSE
LAWTON PLACE
GRAVE OF LITTLE TURTLE
SPY RUN AVENUE
SAINT JOSEPH RIVER
STATE BLVD.
SPY RUN CREEK
SPY RUN AVE.
ANTHONY BLVD.
LAFAYETTE ST.
MAUMEE RIVER
MAUMEE AVE.
WASHINGTON ST.
JEFFERSON ST.
SAINT MARY'S RIVER
CALHOUN ST.
RUDISILL BLVD.
North
A MAP showing the grave of LITTLE TURTLE in relation to Fort Wayne streets and landmarks.
Legend
1. grave of Little Turtle (Lawton Place)
2. house of Captain Wells, where Little Turtle died, 1812. - Spy Run Avenue
3. Allen County Courthouse
4. North Side High School.
5. Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society Museum.
Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

Little Turtle Memorial Park, last resting place of Chief Little Turtle, definitely located July 4, 1912 and dedicated as a park June 12, 1960.

Acknowledgements

Howard L. Von Gunten, Superintendent of Parks

Mrs. Helen W. Sweet, Board of Park Commissioners representative on the Board of Directors of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

Miss Alene Godfrey, Fort Wayne Community Schools representative on the Board of Directors of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

F. Kenneth Feuerbach, Allen County Schools representative on the Board of Directors of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

Willis D. Hite, Allen County Commissioners representative on the Board of Directors of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

Paul R. Clark, Chief of Police

Westinghouse Radio WOWO
Background music

Explorer Troup 2300, Miami Indian Ceremony

Nelson Deuitch	Thomas Hunt
James Helbert	Chuck Notter
Perry Schlie	Mike Kelley
Mike Ferverda	Jack Gooley
Phil Snyder	Ronnie Eakins
Robert Hunt	Ed Kridler
Bob Mansfield	Dennis Van Buskirk
John Kowalczyk	Jeffrey Goshert
Fred Warner	Robert Parquet

Dennis Parquet, Post Advisor

Eleanor Smeltzly

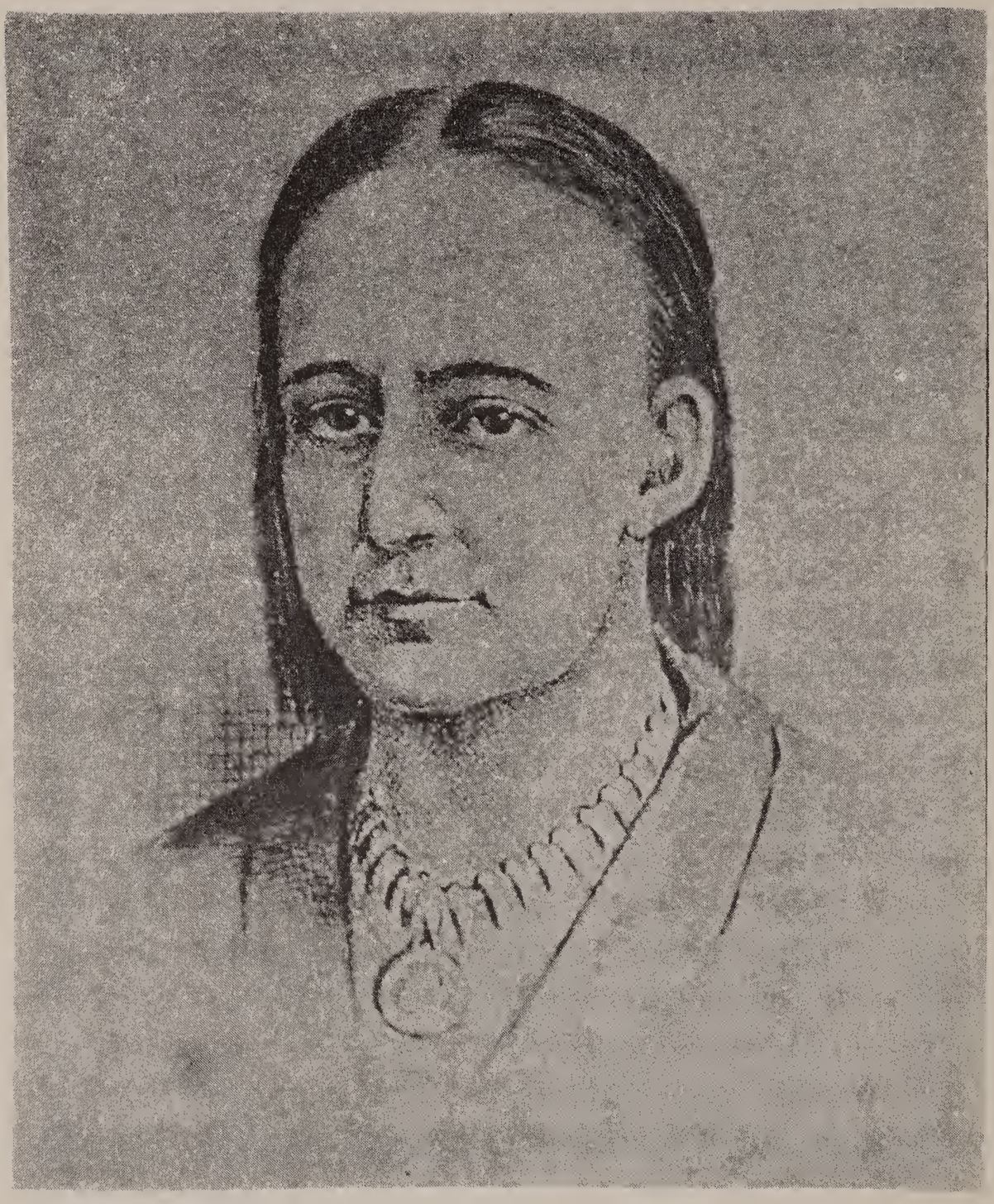
Mary Catherine Smeltzly

The Misses Eleanor and Mary Catherine Smeltzly, natives of Wabash County, Indiana, were educated at Indiana University, from which both received the A. B. degree. For many years both taught history in Fort Wayne, Miss Eleanor at South Side High School, and Miss Mary Catherine at Fort Wayne High School and its successor, Central High School, until their retirement in order to devote more time to travel and lecturing. Both sisters had traveled widely throughout the world, and gave hundreds of lectures based on their travels. They were active in many civic and cultural enterprises in Fort Wayne, including the Community Concert Association, the Y.W.C.A., the American Association of University Women, the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, and the Fort Wayne Woman's Club. Both became life members of the Indiana Historical Society, and their religious affiliation has always been with the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne. Miss Eleanor Smeltzly died in July, 1957. Miss Mary Catherine Smeltzly resides at 350 West Berry Street in Fort Wayne.

LITTLE TURTLE

by

Rex M. Potterf



Little Turtle
Chief of the Miami Indians

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON IN 1796-97

In 1796-97, a distinguished resident of Fort Wayne, Indiana, the great Indian chief, Little Turtle, spent several weeks at Philadelphia as the house guest of President Washington. It was unusual for the Father of our Country to entertain anyone as he entertained Little Turtle. Under the circumstances, it was even more unusual. General Washington was aging rapidly; he was now an old man. Arthritic pains racked his body. His hearing had become defective, and he could only hear words addressed to him across the room if they were spoken in a very loud tone. Moreover, his eyesight had grown dim.

Meanwhile, General Washington's attitude toward public life had become somewhat embittered. Many worthy things he had done for his countrymen were not appreciated. Many heavy criticisms leveled in his direction seemed unfair to him. He had the feeling, rather general among public men, that the best things he did frequently went not only unrewarded and unnoticed but often even condemned.

General Washington's private affairs were not in the best condition. While he had drawn, for that day, the excellent salary of twenty-five thousand dollars a year as President of the United States, still it was inadequate to meet the expenses of the Presidential household. He had to raise an additional fifty thousand dollars by the sale of valuable farm lands to meet his expenses. In fact, when he came to New York in 1789 to be inaugurated President of the United

States, he had borrowed one hundred pounds to finance his immediate expenses.

Thus, General Washington, in the last years of his Presidency, was physically unwell; in his private affairs he was not happy; in his public relations he was somewhat disillusioned. He was eager to lay down the reins of public office. However, General Washington did see fit to spend several weeks of his precious time in the company of this eminent resident of Fort Wayne.

VISIT TO PHILADEPHIA

Fort Wayne in 1796 was only a military post. In the present-day Spy Run Avenue area, there were, it is true, a few French families or half-Indian families. White Frenchmen had married red Indian women and lived there with their half-Indian and half-Caucasian children; there might have been as many as a dozen or more such families.

Little Turtle had become the white man's friend. Although he had earlier been the white man's most implacable enemy and had led the Indians to victory against them on a number of occasions, he became a firm and devoted ally of the whites.

For a variety of reasons, General Washington invited Little Turtle to journey to far-off Philadelphia from distant Fort Wayne and visit him. He wished to reward this great Indian for his acts of friendship toward the whites. He wanted to cement that friendship and also to give Little Turtle additional reasons for being friendly to the Americans. Above all, General Washington wanted to pay his respects to the Indians. He decided to demonstrate that he regarded one of

their great men as the social equal of any of the whites. Indeed, Little Turtle was just that; he was a man of fine manners and excellent intelligence. As a warrior, he was certainly the equal of any professional soldier in the United States.

In 1796 the capital of the nation had been moved down from New York City to Philadelphia. There the federal government had begun its operations; there General Washington resided.

Little Turtle accepted the invitation. He encountered many difficulties in journeying to the nation's capital. Now a man of some forty-four years, he took with him as his traveling companions his nephew, the Toad, and his white son-in-law, Captain Wells. They traveled horseback from Fort Wayne to Toledo, a distance of approximately one hundred ten miles. At Toledo they boarded a sailing craft which conveyed them to Buffalo. Here they were still more than four hundred miles from New York City. They traveled overland from Buffalo to Albany, partly by crude stagecoaches but most of the way on horseback. At Albany they transshipped to a sailing boat and drifted one hundred forty-seven miles down the Hudson River to New York City. From New York City they traveled overland again by stagecoach to Philadelphia. It was a trip of great tedium; it covered many miles; the travelers had to submit to a great many hardships.

Already Little Turtle had traveled widely among the Indian tribes in the West. He had been as far south as Georgia. On one memorable occasion, he had visited the Creek Indians there on a diplomatic mission for his people. However, he had never seen the large cities of the Eastern Seaboard. New York, in that day, was a city of 15,000 people; Philadelphia was nearly as large. To him these cities were unique

and impressive sights. He saw many things new to him.

General Washington treated him as a very good friend; he presented him with a sword. (The sword was later buried with Little Turtle and is now preserved in the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Museum.) General Washington also presented Little Turtle with a medallion; its obverse bore a picture of General Washington and its reverse a likeness of Little Turtle.

During the weeks which Little Turtle spent in Philadelphia, he saw everything that could possibly interest him. He became familiar with urban merchandising and craftsmanship, which caused him to have an increasing respect for the white man. His observation of these skills and procedures, however, caused him to feel that the white man's civilization was not for the Indians.

One memorable event in Little Turtle's life was his submission to vaccination at the request of Washington. At that time, vaccination for small pox was in its infancy. Distinctly a white man's disease, every winter the malady carried off thousands of white people. Medical science of that day had found a preventive for it. As the American frontier advanced, the white man brought this dread disease to the Indian, who had known nothing about it prior to the advent of the white man. Immediately, red men began to die like flies. The prevalence of the disease among the Indians was especially virulent because through the generations they had acquired no immunity to it. They were unfamiliar with it; their bodies had never been accustomed to it; they had never met it before; they, of course, dreaded it a great deal. When Little Turtle heard about the new prophylactic prescribed by his friend, General Washington, he readily agreed

to be vaccinated. He even learned the process of vaccination; later, he recommended it to his friends at home; he vaccinated a number of other Indians so that they would escape the disease.

General Washington realized that the prominent part Little Turtle played in American history merited a portrait which should be available to posterity; Little Turtle sat in the studio of Gilbert Stuart, the great American portrait painter. We identify him today by the portrait which Stuart painted.

During Little Turtle's stay in Philadelphia, he met the great French scientist and traveler, Volney. They became intimate friends and spent much time together. The celebrated Frenchman wanted to learn facts about Indian languages; he was making a study of their words. From Little Turtle he acquired considerable information. Little Turtle was equally curious about facts which Volney could explain. Little Turtle also formed a friendship with the old Polish patriot, Kosciusko, who had fought in the Revolutionary War. The latter thought so much of Little Turtle that he gave him a pair of pistols, which Little Turtle prized and retained until his death.

THE LA BALME MASSACRE

Little Turtle is chiefly noted for his brilliant military career. The long series of ambuscades into which the Indians led the forces of the Americans and the British was continued by Little Turtle, who won three smashing victories over the whites. The first battle of which we have any record of Little Turtle's participation was in 1780 at the Aboite River, some twelve miles southwest of Fort Wayne.

La Balme, a French adventurer, drifted into the town of Vincennes, Indiana, shortly after George Rogers Clark had captured the town from the British in 1778. La Balme desired to emulate the success of George Rogers Clark. The British were in possession of the area north of Vincennes. La Balme assembled as recruits a number of adventurers, some friendly Indians, and a few renegades. In some way, not now known, he armed these men; they started through the forest on their long trek from Vincennes to Three Rivers, viz., the junction of the St. Joseph and the St. Mary's rivers. La Balme was able to lead his men without being discovered to Kekionga, in the present-day Lakeside area of Fort Wayne. He made a surprise attack on the British and Indian forces there; in a brief period he overcame them and took possession of Kekionga.

The British had located considerable stores here, and much Indian wealth in this area was centered in their capital, the village of Kekionga. La Balme's men raided and plundered the town. Some of them discovered a considerable stock of wine and other intoxicating beverages. The adventurers made short work of these libations and were soon in a drunken condition. Under this influence, their treatment of the populace became even worse. They outraged a number of Indian women. La Balme seemed to realize that this conduct would get him and his men into trouble; accordingly, he withdrew from the Indian town to what he considered a safe distance; he camped on the Aboite River, about twelve miles southwest of the present site of Fort Wayne.

Little Turtle, although not a full-blooded Miami himself but rather a half-breed Miami-Mohican, now a promising young leader among the Miami Indians by tribal consent, assumed the leadership of the

Indians who wanted revenge upon La Balme's raiders. He determined to avail himself of the first suitable opportunity to make a surprise attack on La Balme. Little Turtle carefully evaluated the circumstances of time and place. When the raiders retired to the Aboite River, they indiscreetly neglected to provide proper guards and sentries. Little Turtle and his men saw their opportunity and fell upon the marauders. Within a brief period, the Indians had tomahawked every one of the stupidly drunken invaders. This episode is known in history as the La Balme Massacre. It securely established Little Turtle's reputation. He now stood in the eyes of his people without a superior as a warrior.

This military action was in the best tradition of Indian massacres and ambushes. The French and their Indian allies had employed the same tactics against Braddock's forces in 1755 at the Battle of Great Meadows in western Pennsylvania. Thus, another decisive battle was added to the long series of Indian victories over the whites on the western frontier.

VICTORIES OVER HARMAR AND ST. CLAIR

The Miami Indians had two kinds of chiefs--civil chiefs, who were often hereditary, and war chiefs, who were selected by popular vote. These latter leaders were always selected on the basis of their merit. Little Turtle became the leading war chief of the Miamis. Not only was he the leading war chief of the Miamis, but the surrounding tribes, such as the Piankeshaws and Weas, looked to him for military guidance, leadership, and counsel.

Few facts are known about Little Turtle for

the next ten years. In 1790, however, at the age of thirty-eight, he had his second opportunity to defeat the whites. General Washington had dispatched General Josiah Harmar, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, with some six hundred soldiers to castigate the Indians in the Kekionga area. Little Turtle again mobilized his forces. This time he had an Indian army of respectable size, including substantial contingents from tribes other than the Miami. General Harmar had located his army on a spot which apparently was the present-day location of the Three Rivers Filtration and Pumping Station. Here Little Turtle and his savages fell upon General Harmar's unsuspecting forces, who were unaware of any impending danger, and utterly defeated them. The American forces ran for safety; in a short time, the Indians had won the day. This was Little Turtle's second great victory over the whites, and his leadership was now accepted by more distant tribes in the Old Northwest. He had won two notable victories, which had added greatly to Indian self-respect as well as to his own prestige among the Indians.

In 1791 President Washington dispatched a larger force to discipline the Indians of this area. This time the leader was another aged Revolutionary veteran, General Arthur St. Clair. Both he and his predecessor, General Harmar, were afflicted with gout. Little Turtle possessed full knowledge of the advancing army of General St. Clair. Attempting to arouse all the Indians of the entire Northwest Territory, Little Turtle personally visited many neighboring tribes and sent emissaries and messengers into Wisconsin and Illinois. Meanwhile, General St. Clair advanced northward from Cincinnati along the line of present U.S. 127. His army arrived at a point which we know today as Fort Recovery, Ohio; here he en-

camped for the night.

Little Turtle, in the two previous successes, had based his strategy on ambush and surprise. He now sought to defeat St. Clair's forces similarly. St. Clair, in the grasp of the apathy and lethargy which probably accompanied the diseased condition of his body, had no thought of guards or scouting parties. He simply advanced into an untenable position without vigilance. Little Turtle, through his scouts, was aware of the fact that St. Clair lacked scouts and, hence, that he had no sources of information about the activities of the Indians.

With rather great confidence in the outcome, Little Turtle approached his problem. He first assembled the Indians, who had come from different quarters, on a plateau along the St. Mary's River some ten miles southeast of present-day Fort Wayne. He divided his men into several different groups or messes. He designated about one fourth of these messes to hunt for game or vegetables; they were to assemble the food in the late afternoon, when the Indians were to be fed these provisions. He thus employed a very practical method of living off the country. St. Clair's camp, which was about sixty-five miles southeast of the present site of Fort Wayne, occupied the spot now known as Fort Recovery.

Thus organized, Little Turtle's forces advanced very quickly. Traveling lightly, his warriors moved into the immediate neighborhood of St. Clair's camp; the American general did not have the slightest notion that any foes were near him. The commissary department which Little Turtle had organized worked efficiently and skillfully; it provided food once a day--in the evening. The Miami chieftain reconnoitered his position, advanced within a very short distance of St. Clair, and then prepared to pounce upon his foe.

He did so at a moment when General St. Clair least expected it.

The defeat which the American forces suffered that day was unparalleled in the past, and never at any time since has the American army suffered so relatively serious a defeat. The nearest comparable defeat was the destruction of the American fleet at Pearl Harbor in 1941. The results were similar. St. Clair's defeat exposed fifteen hundred miles of undefended frontier to the mercies of the savages. Some nine hundred American soldiers and officers were slain; some two hundred female camp followers lost their lives. The carnage was fearful.

Little Turtle, from an eminence, observed the success of his forces. The terrible slaughter sickened him. When he realized that the whites could not possibly retrieve their defeat, he ordered his men to cease fighting and to stop pursuit of the Americans. Historians have often wondered why he did not follow up his defeat and utterly destroy the American forces. About two thirds of the American army escaped. Little Turtle saw all the bloodshed on that day that he ever wanted to see. On that occasion he possibly decided that he never wanted to participate in another battle. Almost fifteen hundred American soldiers who survived that day owed their lives to the fact that Little Turtle ordered his men to stop the slaughter.

ATTITUDES AND CONVICTIONS

Little Turtle possessed the mentality of a genius. He was, however, a man of no formal training; his knowledge was limited to that which experience had taught him under conditions far different from

those of civilized man. He manifested many strange inconsistencies in his convictions and in his conduct.

He did possess a number of very deep-seated convictions. He believed that no Indian nor any Indian tribe actually had the right to alienate lands or to deed or cede them to any white man or to the United States government. The red men utilized the land in common, and they knew of no such institution as privately owned land. He believed that whenever any man or any group of Indians made a treaty with the United States government it was not binding on other Indians; he was quick to repudiate many treaties ceding lands held in common by the Indians. On the other hand, when he signed the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 he remarked, "I was the last to agree to make this treaty; I shall be the last to break it." He also believed that whenever Indians took up white man's ways they weakened and enervated themselves; he felt that the manners and customs of the whites which the Indians had adopted and accepted were responsible for their downfall. He believed that Indians should actually avoid contact with whites; he had an uncanny understanding of how the white man's diseases attacked the Indian, who had acquired no immunity against them. Above all, he felt that the white man's liquor contributed to the degradation of Indians. Repeatedly he spoke out against the evils of liquor, and he urged that Indians should avoid its use altogether.

He was far ahead of his time in his attitude toward war. An able and successful warrior, he had won each of his three battles with the whites. About 1791, when he was still only forty-three or forty-four years of age, as we have seen, he came to the conclusion that war was not the way to settle difficulties. He thought wars were unproductive and should be avoided at all costs--probably particularly with ref-

erence to Indian relations with the whites. He perceived that the balance of power was moving against the Indians; that time was on the side of the Americans and of civilization; that every year saw the whites stronger and the Indians weaker.

Little Turtle himself accepted many governmental favors. Although he felt that the white man's civilization was not good for the Indians, he himself eagerly accepted the benefits of civilization. He wanted to own a large tract of land (formerly held by the Miami Indians in common) on the Eel River about twenty miles from Fort Wayne, near the present site of Columbia City in Whitley County. The federal government granted it to him, confirmed him in the right to live on that tract of land, and gave him a deed to it. He eagerly accepted the land as his own. The federal government also built a large brick house on his property and presented him with valuable gifts, monetary subsidies, and other material things which made life more comfortable for him. Naturally these circumstances contributed strongly toward Little Turtle's unpopularity with the Miamis; these possessions accentuated the jealousy which his fellow tribesmen felt for him during the last years of his life.

LATER YEARS

Little Turtle, during the fifteen years which elapsed after the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, experienced his greatest prosperity--the confirmation of his title to land in Whitley and Allen counties, the new home which the government built for him, and the large subsidies of money and material possessions which the United States government gave him. The

government bestowed many marks of favor upon him; its local agents consulted him on affairs of importance; it accepted his advice in its dealings with the Miami, Wea, and Piankesha Indians. All those things brought Little Turtle into bad repute with his people. All could remember that, prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers, he had counseled peace and appeasement; it had seemed necessary to displace him from its leadership.

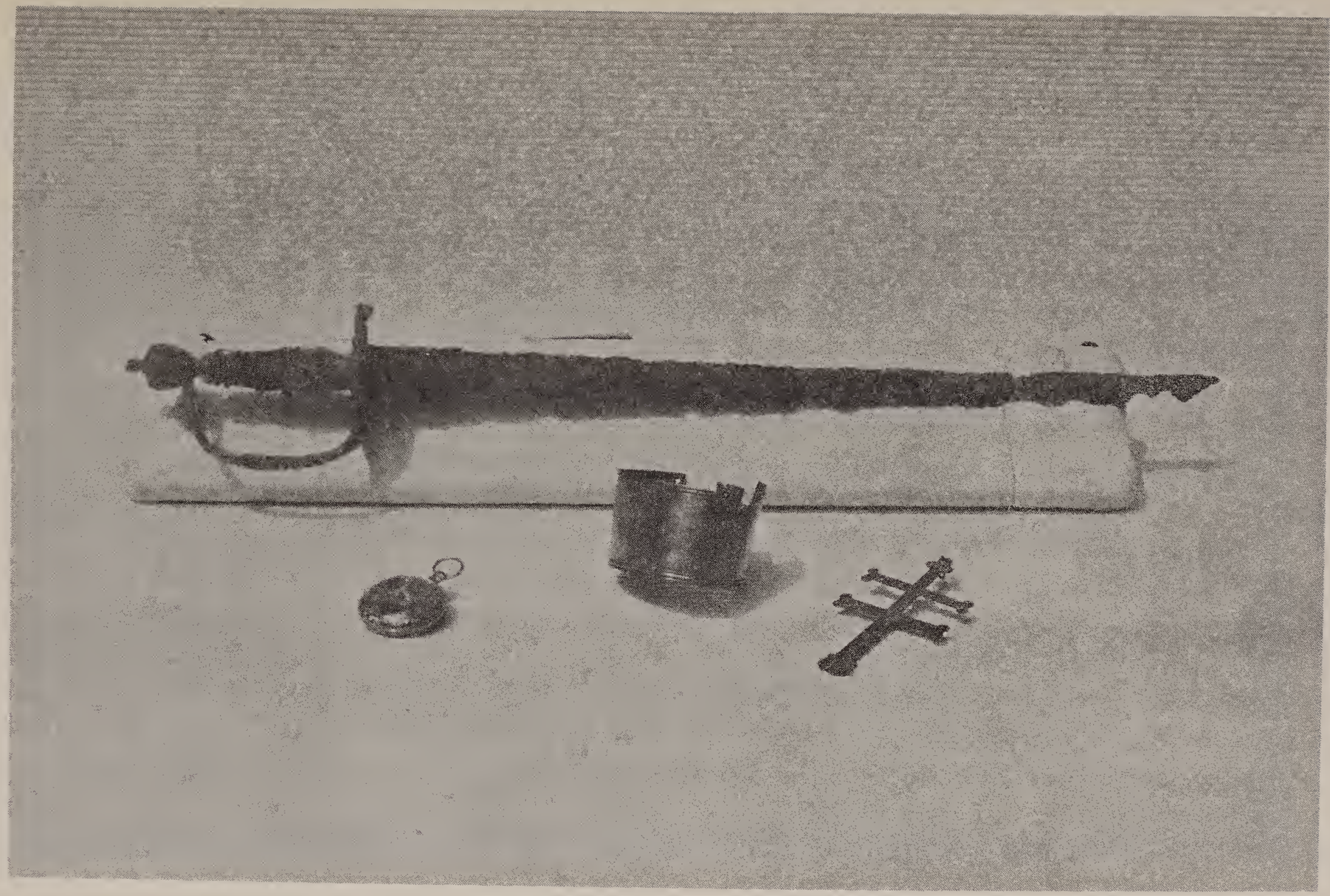
During the last years of his life, Little Turtle lived a more comfortable, more expensive, and more luxurious life than did any of the civilized Americans in this community. He had greater means than anyone else; he was the wealthiest man in this area. His accumulations constantly increased; his people, however, looked upon him as a renegade. He loved the society of the white man, although he expressly sought to deny it to his own people. This great Indian manifested another inconsistency in his manners; he rapidly assimilated the elegant manners of civilization. His manner of eating was that of the white man, as were likewise his carriage, his garments, and his food. This again was at variance with his recommendations to his own people. Even his death demonstrated a deep inconsistency. He died of a malady which distinctly belonged to civilization--gout--a disease of gluttony and sedentation. It is a rather interesting commentary upon the times that gout afflicted Little Turtle and his three great American military rivals--Josiah Harmar, Arthur St. Clair, and Anthony Wayne--in their last years.

DEATH AND FUNERAL

In the spring of 1812, Little Turtle suffered cruelly from the gout. As the attacks became longer and more virulent, he went to live with his son-in-law, Captain Wells, who then resided in present-day Lakeside. He hoped to have medical assistance from the United States army surgeon at Fort Wayne, across the river from Captain Wells's residence. In that day almost no sedation was available except the usual alcoholic libations. The old warrior refused to have anything to do with liquor, and his sufferings became no less. He died shortly thereafter.

The American forces gave Little Turtle a military funeral. The muffled drum, the solemn march, and the funeral salute all betokened that a mighty warrior, an outstanding diplomat, and a patriotic American had passed on to the land where his fathers had gone before him. In the glorious hereafter, which constituted the reward for faithful warriors, Little Turtle could now look forward to green valleys, sparkling waters, and abundant game. In those happy hunting grounds he would require the same mundane artifacts which cheered his life while living.

After the funeral address by Chief Coissee, grandson to Little Turtle, the old chieftain was wrapped in a beautiful, green patterned blanket, which served as his winding sheet. At his side lay the sword which Washington had presented him. In his belt was the pair of beautiful pistols which General Kosciusko had given him long ago. His long hair was tied with a leather thong; two strings of beads--one silver and the other white--hung about his neck. On each breast lay a silver disk, and he wore his silver armlets and anklets as in real life. The grave was made large enough to contain these and many other items. Dur-



Relics found in the grave of Little Turtle

ing the following century Little Turtle's grave was forgotten. No one knew where the great man was buried.

On July 4, 1912, during the preparations for the building of Dr. Gillie's home, workmen uncovered an Indian grave. Jacob H. Stouder identified the contents as those of Little Turtle's grave. The artifacts were carefully removed and cataloged and are now treasured by the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society. Little Turtle's friends had prepared for his needs in the future life in respect to weapons, food, and the tools of civilized existence. The grave contained a gun barrel, a rusted pistol, a tomahawk, a pair of bullet molds, a copper kettle containing corn and beans, many silver ornaments (bracelets, brooches, armlets, anklets, pendants, and medals) an ax, a hammer, a spoon, and a drinking cup.

Prior to his death, Little Turtle's last great service to his American friends was preventing the Miami Indians from joining forces with the British prior to the War of 1812. Although he had become unpopular with his people and was not trusted by them, still he found ways of influencing them; when the British emissaries came down from Detroit and Michilimackinac to seek alliance with the Miamis against the Americans, Little Turtle knew how to prevent any such combination. Had the Miami Indians joined the English, the alliance would not have turned the scale in their favor in the West, but it would have been decidedly inconvenient and difficult for the American cause. General Harrison would have found it much more difficult to accomplish his military objectives, if he had faced an insurrection of the Miami Indians. So, in his last years, and at his death, as indeed for most of the time after the Treaty of Greenville, Little Turtle threw his personal influence in the balance in

favor of the Americans.

By that time, the encroachments of the white man, the enervating diseases of the white man, and the scourge of whisky had tremendously weakened the Miami Indians; they were then little more than a weak dependency of the whites.

PERSONAL GLIMPSES

In spite of Little Turtle's window dressing of civilization and his elegant manners, he was still at heart the savage and child of the forest. Innately and inherently, his ways were those of the red man. When he grew old, the wife of his youth, too, was an old woman. She had lost her attractiveness and youthful beauty; she was worn out with hard work. Little Turtle put her aside and married another wife--a beautiful young Indian girl of seventeen. He was almost three times her age. He still retained his first wife as a housekeeper and household drudge, and she continued to reside in the big brick house which the government had built for him. Visitors testified that no friction existed between the two women. A Quaker commission which visited him took note of this fact and observed that harmony seemed to prevail in the household.

Neither the military authorities at Fort Wayne nor the few Americans who lived there took any exception to Little Turtle's conduct. They simply regarded it as a manifestation of Indian ways. Even if they had so desired, they could have done little about it; they were few in number, and the Indian viewpoint still prevailed. Certainly Little Turtle adopted only that portion of civilized ways which it pleased him to

adopt.

Little Turtle maintained a long-time relationship with a white renegade whose name was William Wells. Miami Indians had kidnapped William Wells, then a child of twelve, from his home in Kentucky. They conveyed Wells northward and adopted him into their tribe. Indoctrinated with Indian ways and customs, he grew to maturity considering himself an Indian. Later in life Wells remembered very little of his childhood and had little or no desire to return to the white people. He participated in Little Turtle's campaigns against Harmar and St. Clair. A brave warrior, he was respected by the Indians. Little Turtle and Wells became brothers-in-arms. Wells married Little Turtle's daughter.

As a youth in his Kentucky home, William Wells had been taught to cipher, to read, and to write, and he never forgot these skills. When Little Turtle learned that William Wells was literate, he besought Wells to teach him the rudiments of reading and writing. William Wells, a captive white boy, a renegade white man, and an adopted Indian, did so; therefore, he was responsible for whatever learning Little Turtle possessed.

LITTLE TURTLE AND GENERAL WAYNE

When General Wayne advanced northward from Cincinnati in 1793 and 1794 in the direction of the Miami village at the confluence of the rivers, Little Turtle studied the movements of the white man's army. Day after day Tecumseh followed Wayne's legion, watched Wayne's methods, and tried to interpret his strategy. From Tecumseh's report Little

Turtle concluded that Wayne was a great soldier. Evidence convinced him that the Indians would not be able to cope with Wayne as they had ambushed both Harmar and St. Clair. As he studied Wayne's strategy, Little Turtle attempted to find flaws in the American general's conduct of military operations; he found none.

Instead, Little Turtle became a great admirer of "Mad Anthony." He foresaw that Indian victories over the Americans were at an end and that in the future the Indians had little hope of defeating them. Little Turtle now became an appeaser and an advocate of peace. In council, in private conversations, and wherever possible, he urged that his fellow tribesmen make peace with Anthony Wayne; he predicted that otherwise the Americans would utterly annihilate the Indians. This policy of cultivating the Americans was very distasteful to Little Turtle's friends and neighbors. They soon regarded him as a traitor or worse. Some said he was a poltroon and a coward, who was afraid to fight again and who was terrorized at the thought of American weapons. Little Turtle continued to advocate peace.

Meanwhile, Wayne advanced steadily northward. It soon became apparent that the Indians would join battle with Anthony Wayne's forces. Conflict was inevitable. The Miami Indian leaders gathered in conference around the campfire to determine their proper tactics and strategy. Buckongehelas, Red Jacket, the Toad (Little Turtle's nephew), and other Indian chiefs were present. Each one was asked for his opinion; each one favored waging battle against the Americans except Little Turtle. The chieftains reviewed their glorious past. They recounted how the Indians had defeated Braddock in western Pennsylvania, how they massacred La Balme, how they

had surprised General Harmar, how they had ambushed General St. Clair. All seemed convinced that Anthony Wayne and his army would be victimized as were previous American armies.

LITTLE TURTLE'S PROPHECY

Then they asked Little Turtle, who had previously remained silent, for his opinion. As the flames of the campfire shot upwards and died down, the tall form of Little Turtle arose with folded arms; he faced the other council members. I cannot quote his remarks verbatim, but were I to paraphrase his speech, it was essentially as follows: Previously we have defeated the Americans in every battle, but now the Americans are led by a chief who never sleeps. Our young men have probed and tried to find weaknesses in his lines, but there are none. Warriors, I feel that our victories are at an end. General Wayne will defeat us in battle. Something whispers to me that we should listen to his request for peace. He has asked us for peace; let us make peace with him.

This counsel was most unpopular. Little Turtle stood majestically before the rest of the council with three great silver nose rings glistening with the reflection of the campfire; he wore Indian moccasins and a blue petticoat, which came halfway down his thighs. He wore an Indian headdress, which hung halfway down his back, and was decorated with more than two hundred silver brooches; two foot-long silver earrings fell on his chest, and two dangled behind his back. He stood with folded arms and with a scowl upon his countenance, because he habitually wore a sour expression; he knew well what these men would

say to him. They greeted his remarks with words which meant "quitter"; they even accused him of having sold out to Wayne and to the Americans. He flinched not; he faced his accusers; he stared them out of countenance and did not withdraw his remarks.

Little Turtle had been the chief war leader of the Miamis for fourteen years; he had led them since that night when he slew La Balme and his eighty soldiers down on the Aboite River. His tribesmen now repudiated him; they stripped him of all military authority. Now he was only one more Indian warrior. Little Turtle's courage had been impugned--the worst humiliation a warrior can suffer. He resolved to go into battle the next day and fight with every ounce of his strength. Always an able warrior, he fought like a tiger on that fatal day, but the Indians were defeated. Wayne vindicated Little Turtle's judgment.